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CENTRAL FAX CENTER
AUG 04 2008

Amendments to the claims

Claims 1-33. (canceled)

34. (Previously submitted) An audio program player comprising:

a input port for receiving a plurality of separate digital compressed audio program files from an external source,

a digital memory unit for persistently storing said audio program files and for further storing at least one sequencing file containing data specifying an ordered sequence of a collection of said audio program files,

an audio output unit including at least one speaker or headset for reproducing said audio program files in audible form perceptible to a listener,

one or more manual controls for accepting commands from said listener, and

a processor for continuously delivering a succession of said audio program files in said collection to said audio output unit in said ordered sequence specified by said sequencing file in the absence of a command from said listener, and for discontinuing the reproduction of the currently playing audio program file and instead continuing the reproduction at the beginning of a listener-selected one of said audio program files in said collection in response to a command from said listener.

35. (Previously submitted) The audio program player as set forth in claim 34 further comprising a display screen for displaying a visible listing describing each audio program file in said collection wherein said listener-selected audio program file is chosen by said listener by employing one or more of said controls to select an audio program file described on said visible listing.

36. (Previously submitted) The audio program player as set forth in claim 35 wherein said display screen provides a visible indication of said currently playing audio program file on said visible listing.

37. (Previously submitted) The audio program player as set forth in claim 36 wherein said processor responds to a skip forward command accepted from said listener by discontinuing the reproduction of said currently playing audio program file and instead continuing the reproduction at the beginning of that audio program file which follows said currently audio program file in said ordered sequence specified by said sequencing file.

38. (Previously submitted) The audio program player as set forth in claim 37 wherein said processor responds to a single skip backward command accepted from said listener by discontinuing the reproduction of said currently playing audio program file and instead continuing the reproduction at the beginning of said currently playing audio program file.

39. (Previously submitted) The audio program player as set forth in claim 38 wherein said processor responds to the detection of two consecutive skip backward commands for discontinuing the reproduction of the currently playing program segment and instead continuing the reproduction at the beginning of a program segment which precedes the currently playing program segment.

40. (Previously submitted) The audio program player as set forth in claim 35 wherein each of said audio program files stored in said digital memory unit is designated by a unique program identifier and wherein said sequencing file specifies the program identifier of each of the audio program files in said collection.

41. (Previously submitted) The audio program player as set forth in claim 40 wherein said digital memory further stores program description data comprising a plurality of program description records each of which:

- (a) describes a given one of said audio program files stored in said memory unit,
- (b) contains the unique program identifier designating said given one of said audio program files,
- (c) specifies displayable text describing said given one of said audio program files, and
- (d) specifies the storage location of said given one of said audio program files.

42. (Previously submitted) The audio program player as set forth in claim 34 further comprising a communications port for establishing a data communications link to one or more server computers for receiving said audio program files and said sequencing file from said one or more server computers.

43. (Previously submitted) The audio program player as set forth in claim 42 wherein said audio program files received from said one or more server computers are selected by or on behalf of said listener from a library of audio program files available from said one or more server computers.

44. (Previously submitted) The audio program player as set forth in claim 43 wherein at least some of said program files received from said one or more server computers are specified by requests transmitted by said listener to said server computer via said communication link.

45. (Previously submitted) The audio program player as set forth in claim 44 wherein said one or more manual controls include a keyboard for accepting account information from said listener that is transmitted via said communications link to said one or more server computers to establish a subscription account for said listener, said account information including a unique identification of said listener, a password supplied by and known to said listener, and credit card information for use in billing charges to said listener, and wherein at least some of said program files received from said one or more server computers and specified by said requests transmitted by said listener are purchased by said listener and charged to said subscription account.

46. (Previously submitted) The audio program player as set forth in claim 42 wherein at least some of said program files received from said server computer are selected by or recommended by said server computer based on data describing the preferences of or past requests submitted by said listener.

47. (Previously submitted) An audio program player for automatically playing a collection of audio program files selected by a listener, said player comprising, in combination:

a memory unit for storing:

(a) a plurality of digital audio program files,

(b) program description data including displayable text describing each of said audio program files, and

(c) at least one playback session scheduling file which specifies an ordered sequence of a collection of said audio program files,

one or more controls for accepting input commands from said listener,

a display screen for presenting a visual menu listing to said listener containing displayable text describing some or all of the audio program files in said collection,

an audio playback unit for automatically and continuously reproducing said audio program files in said collection in the ordered sequence specified by said playback session scheduling file in the absence of a control command from said listener, and

a processor responsive to one of said input commands designating a selected audio program file described on said visual menu listing for causing said audio playback unit to discontinue the reproduction of the currently playing audio program file in said ordered sequence and to instead commence the reproduction of said selected audio program file.

48. (Previously submitted) The audio program player for automatically playing a collection of audio program files selected by a listener as set forth in claim 47 wherein said display screen visually indicates the currently playing audio program file as playing progresses.

49. (Previously submitted) The audio program player for automatically playing a collection of audio program files selected by a listener as set forth in claim 47 further comprising a communications port for receiving said audio program files and said playback session scheduling file from said one or more server computers.

50. (Previously submitted) The audio program player for automatically playing a collection of audio program files selected by a listener as set forth in claim 49 wherein said audio program files received from said one or more server computers are selected by or on behalf of said listener from a library of audio program files available from said one or more server computers.

51. (Previously submitted) The audio program player for automatically playing a collection of audio program files selected by a listener as set forth in claim 50 wherein at least some of said program files received from said one or more server computers are specified by requests transmitted to said server computer by said listener via said communications port.

52. (Previously submitted) The audio program player for automatically playing a collection of audio program files selected by a listener as set forth in claim 51 at least some of said program files received from said server computer are purchased by said listener.

53. (Previously submitted) The audio program player for automatically playing a collection of audio program files selected by a listener as set forth in claim 52 wherein said one or more controls include a keyboard for accepting account information from said listener that is transmitted via said communications port to said one or more server computers to establish a subscription account for said listener, said account information including a unique identification for said listener, a password, and credit card information for use in billing charges to said listener, and wherein at least some of said program files received from said one or more server computers and specified by requests from said listener are purchased by said listener and charged to said subscription account.

54. (Previously submitted) The audio program player for automatically playing a collection of audio program files selected by a listener as set forth in claim 53 wherein said audio program files purchased by said listener are transmitted to said player in encrypted form and wherein said processor decrypts said purchased audio program files prior to their reproduction by said audio playback unit.

55. (Previously submitted) The audio program player for automatically playing a collection of audio program files selected by a listener as set forth in claim 50 wherein at least some of said program files received from said server computer are selected at said server computer based on data describing the preferences of said listener.

56. (Previously submitted) The audio program player for automatically playing a collection of audio program files selected by a listener as set forth in claim 50 wherein at least some of said audio program files available from said one or more server computers are organized into subject matter categories and wherein said player transmits a request to said one or more server computers for a catalog listing of programs available in a specified one of said categories and said player thereafter transmits a request for and receives one or more audio program files specified in said catalog listing of programs for future playback.

57. (Previously submitted) The audio program player for automatically playing a collection of audio program files selected by a listener as set forth in claim 49 further including editing means operable by said listener for adding, deleting or reordering the audio program files specified by said playback session scheduling file.

58. (Previously submitted) The audio program player for automatically playing a collection of audio program files selected by a listener as set forth in claim 57 wherein said processor responds to a skip forward input command accepted from said listener by discontinuing the reproduction of the currently playing audio program file and instead continuing the reproduction at the beginning of that audio program file which follows said currently audio program file in said ordered sequence specified by said playback session scheduling file.

59. (Previously submitted) The audio program player for automatically playing a collection of audio program files selected by a listener as set forth in claim 58 wherein said processor responds to a single skip backward command accepted from said listener by discontinuing the reproduction of the currently playing audio program file and instead continuing the reproduction at the beginning of said currently playing audio program file.

60. (Previously submitted) The audio program player for automatically playing a collection of audio program files selected by a listener as set forth in claim 59 detection of two consecutive ones of said second commands for discontinuing the reproduction of the currently playing program segment and instead continuing the reproduction at the beginning of a program segment which precedes the currently playing program segment in said ordered sequence specified by said playback session scheduling file.

61. (Previously submitted) The audio program player for automatically playing a collection of audio program files selected by a listener as set forth in claim 47 wherein each of said audio program files stored in said memory unit is designated by a unique program identifier and wherein said playback session scheduling file specifies the program identifier of each of the audio program files in said collection.

62. (Previously submitted) The audio program player for automatically playing a collection of audio program files selected by a listener as set forth in claim 61 wherein said program description data comprises a plurality of program description records each of which:

- (a) describes a given one of said audio program files stored in said memory unit,
 - (b) contains the unique program identifier for said given one of said audio program files,
 - (c) specifies said displayable text describing said given one of said audio program files,
- and
- (d) specifies the storage location of said given one of said audio program files.

63. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files via a communications network to an audio player located at each of a plurality of client locations, each audio player comprising a client processor, a client data store and a client display unit, said host server system comprising, in combination:

one or more server data storage units for storing:

a plurality of digital audio recording files, and

attribute data describing each of said digital audio recording files, said attribute data comprising:

displayable data describing the title or content of each of said digital audio recording files;

data specifying one or more subject matter categories to which each of said digital audio recording files belongs; and

data specifying the storage location at which each of said digital audio recording files may be accessed; and

one or more downloadable utility programs that are executable by said client processor at each given client location for performing client functions requested by a person operating said audio player at said given client location, said client functions including:

downloading and displaying one or more catalog listings from said host server system identifying digital audio recording files available from said host server system;

selecting desired digital audio recording files specified by said person from said displayed catalog listings,

downloading said desired digital audio recording files via said communications network from said host server system;

storing said desired digital audio recording files in said client data store at said given client location; and

selecting and reproducing one or more of said digital audio recording files as stored in said client data store in audible form perceptible to said person; and

one or more communication interfaces for performing server functions in response to requests received via said communications network from said client locations, said server functions including:

transmitting said one or more utility programs to a requesting client location for storage in said client data store at said requesting client location for subsequent execution by said client processor at said client location to perform said client functions;

compiling said catalog listings from said attribute data and transmitting said catalog listings to client locations for display on said client display units; and

transmitting specified digital audio recording files to a client location requesting said specified digital audio recording files.

64. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 63 wherein one or more of said catalog listings downloaded to said given client location identify digital audio recording files that may be of interest to said person operating said client player at said given client location.

65. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 63 wherein said one or more server data storage units further store subscriber data describing a subscriber account established for identified ones of said persons, said subscriber data including:

a stored password for authenticating the identity of said person operating said individual client player at each of said client locations, and

credit card information identifying a credit card account from which payments from each of subscriber accounts may be obtained.

66. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 64 wherein said subscriber data further includes preference data indicating one or more of said subject matter categories that are designated as being of interest to the person for which the subscriber account is established.

67. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 66 wherein said server functions further include comparing a password supplied by a person requesting data from said host server system against said stored password in said subscriber data to authenticate the identity of said person requesting data.

68. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 66 wherein one of said communications interfaces is a web server for delivering HTML pages to a web browser executing on a client processor at each of said client locations, including HTML form pages for accepting said subscriber data from a person using said web browser to establish a new subscriber account.

69. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 63 wherein said attribute data further comprises an indication of the scheduled playback time duration of each of said audio recording files and wherein said catalog listings include said scheduled playback time duration for each listed digital audio recording file available from said host server system.

70. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 69 wherein said client functions further include displaying the elapsed time remaining to be played in the digital audio recording file currently being reproduced by a client player.

71. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 70 wherein said one or more server data storage units further store image data files and wherein said client functions include displaying selected image data files on said client display unit concurrently with the reproduction of associated ones of said digital audio recording files.

72. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 63 wherein said one or more server data storage units further store image data files and wherein said client functions include displaying selected image data files on said client display unit concurrently with the reproduction of associated ones of said digital audio recording files.

73. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 63 wherein said server functions include compiling a session sequencing file that specifies an ordered sequence of a set of said digital audio recording files and wherein said client functions further include reproducing said set of digital audio recording files in the order specified by said session sequencing file.

74. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 73 wherein said client functions include responding to playback navigation commands accepted from said person operating said client player for altering the order in which said set of digital audio recording files are reproduced.

75. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 74 wherein said client functions further include modifying said session sequencing file to alter the order in which said set of digital audio recording files are reproduced.

76. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 75 wherein said client functions further include modifying said session sequencing file by adding the specification of one or more new digital audio recording files to said set of digital audio recording files.

77. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 76 wherein said client functions further include modifying said session sequencing file by deleting the specification of one or more digital audio recording files from said set of digital audio recording files.

78. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 63 wherein said catalog listings compiled from said attribute data include catalog listings identifying available digital audio recording files organized into one or more subject matter categories specified by said attribute data.

79. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 78 wherein said server functions include responding to a request specifying a particular subject matter category received from a specific client location by transmitting a catalog listing identifying available digital audio recording files belonging to said particular subject matter category to said specific client location.

80. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 63 wherein one of said communications interfaces is a web server for delivering HTML pages to a web browser executing on said client processor at each of said client locations, said HTML pages including HTML form pages for accepting data from each of said client locations establishing a subscription account.

81. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 63 wherein said communications network is or includes the Internet.

82. (New) A host server system for disseminating digital audio recording files as set forth in claim 63 wherein said communications network is or includes a cellular packet data network.